

6 January 2021

Terence Conway  
Headteacher  
Norham High School  
Alnwick Road  
North Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE29 7BU

Dear Mr Conway

### **Ofsted remote visit to Norham High School**

Following my remote visit with Jean Watt, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 November 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you and the senior leadership team. We did not speak to pupils.

### **Context**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full

education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

**From this visit, inspectors noted that:**

- You told us that a number of pupils have had to self-isolate since September.
- Pupils study the full range of subjects in their usual curriculum. Leaders have introduced time for tutors to deliver personal, social and emotional health and well-being sessions specifically to support pupils' return to school.
- Teachers have used class assessments to check what pupils know and remember. This has helped teachers to plan and teach forgotten subject content alongside the usual curriculum.
- Leaders have plans in place to help pupils catch up in reading. Some pupils in Years 7 and 8 have additional reading lessons. Curriculum plans have been adapted in Years 7 to 9 to ensure pupils build on their reading knowledge in all subjects. In English, mathematics, and other subjects such as science and music, leaders have directed teaching assistants to support pupils who have specific gaps in learning.
- Leaders told us that reading is a priority for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers spend more time across all subjects reading to pupils and explaining key vocabulary. Extra one-hour sessions are available after school for Years 10 and 11 pupils to ensure that they cover content they missed in various subjects during the period that schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Leaders told us that all pupils have access to a laptop or computer at home. All staff create and deliver online learning resources that match the school's

normal curriculum. These are delivered when pupils have to study from home. Pupils submit work that is regularly monitored by heads of year, and feedback is provided from teachers.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Tyneside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Thomas  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**